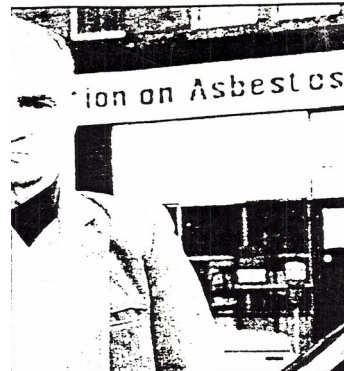


# OM DAMAGES OCK AT EY CUT



Mullin doesn't believe the victims are being treated correctly

o the longer a case drags on in courts, the more money the victims stand to lose.

The legislation has horrified those living with compensation cases, will simply wipe out some me," declared lawyer Frank gure.

## HORRIFIED

The civil servants who drafted simply don't understand reparations cases - and don't really want to us.

Labour's Scots Health spokesman n Galbraith blasted the relation.

"I think it is completely callous. It's difficult enough trying to get people compensation, but then

to remove part of it and pay it to the DSS is grossly unfair."

The CMB, one of the country's biggest unions, has circulated interested organisations urging them not to give up on cases because of the legislation.

It has made its case quite clear: "The scheme is yet another government initiative which will mean that working people lose out."

But the DSS has no intention of changing the controversial scheme. A spokeswoman said: "Basically, the law is aimed at reforming the losses a claimant has suffered or may suffer."

"It is not the intention that the claimant should receive both benefits and compensation for the same injury or disease."

## s Centre opens

them through the complicated procedure of claiming from the DHSS."

The centre has so far helped around 150 people claim, with backdated awards amounting in some cases to £30,000. The total awards made to people helped by the centre already exceed £250,000, she says.

The unit hopes to obtain funding under the urban aid scheme, to enable it to employ a full-time worker.

For more details: Asbestos Victims Centre, 5 St Margaret's Place, Brigat, Glasgow (041-552 8852).

# This is Williamina Watkins. She is dying because she cleaned her husband's clothes

# DUST of DEATH

**THIS is the brave and remarkable woman who is dying a slow and agonising death because her husband worked in the shipyards.**

Williamina Watkins has never held a welder's torch or fitted out a frigate, but every weekend she washed her husband Charlie's clothes.

She booted them, she shook them, she brushed his shoes, and afterwards she hosed the last specks of asbestos dust off the carpets.

In 1976 Charlie died from asbestosis and today Williamina is paying the price for being a loving, caring wife.

## Wash

Now she has contracted the related condition, Mesothelioma, and has only months to live.

And she got it from cleaning his clothes.

"Charlie would come home on a Friday night and he was covered in white dust from head to toe," she said.

"You had to take the dampers, shirt - all his working clothes - and beat the white off them before you could wash them."

"You couldn't have that mess in

**SPECIAL REPORT By MAGGIE BARRY**

both. Then I would wash them in the double tub and put them through the wringer.

"You would not believe the amount of dust that came off his clothes. And I just breathed it in too because we weren't the wiser then."

## Price

Now she and a growing band of women are paying the terrible price. Each year more and more of them are dying from asbestos related disease - yet they never worked beside the deadly stuff themselves.

Now in her sixties, Williamina is tall and gaunt. Until last June she was a healthy 11 stones with a life-style that was as satisfying as it was hectic.

Today she is a frail 7 stones 10lbs, her hair is falling out and she cannot live alone. Her son has moved back in with her.

"It's an awful life," she admits in her soft Highland lilt. "I have only months left."

"You know you are dying but you

But I can't do anything about it. It's like everything else. I have one of us has a time limit. It's not us to say how long we have left."

"But it's very frustrating. I have been used to a hectic life."

## Dose

With clinical coolness and the trace of self-pity she describes how as she makes her way through day from dose to dose of medication beginning with a large shot of morphine as soon as she wakes up in pain.

She sleeps on sheepskins to her bed-sore - but sleeps badly, or banked up by pillows with turning all night.

Even the least household task makes her breathless. She has come a prisoner of her television role she does not relish, for she never an avid watcher.

She worked all her days didn't, as they say, know how to do it.

Today even the smallest household tasks leave her panting, breathless.

And the injustice of it is anyone lived their life to this was Williamina Watkins.

She came to Glasgow from the Highlands as a young woman trained as a nurse at the St General and Belvidere, and in any time worked near asbestos.

## GLASWEGIANS FIGHT ASBESTOS

Nearly 100 people, many of whom were seriously ill with asbestos related diseases, turned out on a very wet day in June for the first annual general meeting of the *Clydeside Action on Asbestos* campaign. They heard the chair, Bob Crockett, describe an eventful first year: at long last a grant of 2,500 pounds from Strathclyde Regional Council; low rent premises at 5 St Margaret's Place, Glasgow which are to be occupied shortly; a very active Victim's Support Group. Activities during the year included meeting with trade unions, discussing with

